

THE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY



Glenn Nevill/www.raptor-gallery.com

Peregrine Falcon fledgling in San Francisco.

San Francisco Takes the Lead on Bird Safe Buildings

The city of San Francisco recently took bold action by approving the strictest standards in the United States for protecting birds from building collisions. On September 27, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the Standards for Bird Safe Buildings, a 44-page document developed by the San Francisco Planning Department with assistance from Golden Gate Audubon and the American Bird Conservancy. These standards include sections on safer windows, night lighting, and the construction of urban wind turbines.

San Francisco is situated on the Pacific Flyway, one of the major bird migratory routes in the Western Hemisphere. At least 400 species of birds live in or migrate through the city, nearly half of all North American species. According to US Fish and Wildlife Service estimates, collisions with structures may account for between 100 million and 1 billion birds killed annually in North America. The nation's leading expert, Dr. Daniel Klem of Pennsylvania's Muhlenberg College, estimates that between 1 and 5 percent of the total migratory population die in window crashes each year, including many endangered or threatened species. Recent local collision fatalities include three fledglings of the beloved Peregrine Falcons nesting at the PG&E Building in downtown San Francisco.

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It's Christmas Count Time

Round up your birding friends and join GGAS's 2011 Christmas Bird Counts. Oakland on Sunday, December 18, and San Francisco on Tuesday, December 27. You'll have an enjoyable day of birding, one that you can top off with a delicious dinner and the chance to hear what birds others have found that day, including rarities you might want to seek. The counts are a popular tradition. Oakland usually attracts 150-plus field observers, and San Francisco more than 90.

Invitations to sign up have been e-mailed to people who participated in either count in recent years and provided an e-mail address. San Francisco co-compiler Alan Hopkins urges would-be participants to sign up promptly. "Holiday time is busy for all of us, so it really helps if you sign up early, to be assured of a spot on a team. Remember, we welcome birders of every level. If you're able, please help the environment by signing up online—this will save paper and the cost of mailing. If you've participated recently but don't have Internet access, we'll snail-mail forms to you. If you're new to the count, you can request sign-up forms from the GGAS office."

This season marks the 112th year of Christmas Bird Counts. Each count attempts to identify and count the birds within a defined 15-mile-diameter circle during one calendar day. Last year, thousands of volunteers counted roughly 60 million birds across the Americas and

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Diane Ross-Leech President
 Mark Mushkat Treasurer
 Linda Vallee Secretary
 Karim Al-Khafaji
 David Anderson
 Whitney Dotson
 Jack Dumbacher
 Alan Harper
 Carey Knecht
 John Muir Laws
 Michael Lozeau
 Sarah Peterman
 Jay Pierrepont
 Phil Price
 Rich Walkling

Mark Welther 510.843.9912
 mwelther@goldengateaudubon.org

Mike Lynes 510.843.6551
 mlynes@goldengateaudubon.org

Lisa Owens Viani 510.843.7295
 lowensvi@goldengateaudubon.org

Anthony DeCicco 510.843.2222
 adecicco@goldengateaudubon.org

Marissa Ortega-Welch 510.843.2222
 mortegawelch@goldengateaudubon.org

Stephanie Strait 510.843.2222

Noreen Weeden 510.301.0570
 volunteer@goldengateaudubon.org

Judith Dunham judithdnhm@yahoo.com

Bruce Mast observe@goldengateaudubon.org

webeditor@goldengateaudubon.org

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRD BOX
 415.681.7422

The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Supporting Membership is \$35 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. The board of directors meets six times per year (schedule can be obtained from the main office).

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Golden Gate Audubon Society
 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G
 Berkeley, CA 94702

TEL 510.843.2222 FAX 510.843.5351
 www.goldengateaudubon.org
 ggass@goldengateaudubon.org

For Nature Store hours, please call or check the website.

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Eco-Education Now in San Francisco

If you were a migrating Black-bellied Plover flying over San Francisco's southern waterfront and looking for a place to rest, Pier 94 would be a welcome oasis. Though surrounded by industrial sites, it offers seven acres of wetland and upland habitat. And this year, you are seeing more young humans.

Golden Gate Audubon staff and volunteers have been restoring this former dump since 2006 and now have help. Beginning this year, third, fourth, and fifth graders from San Francisco Title I schools are picking up trash, testing water samples, pulling non-native plants, replacing the invasives with natives, and monitoring bird species.

We are excited that our award-winning Eco-Education Program is now in San Francisco. You can see details of this wonderful community-based program, which has engaged 15,000 students and their families in environmental stewardship over the past 12 years, on our new video: www.goldengateaudubon.org/education/eco-education-programs.

Eco-Education, partially supported by the Miles T. McKey Memorial Fund and the Ann Witter Memorial Environmental Education Fund, is one more reason to send a year-end gift to Golden Gate Audubon (see page 11). You can also put on your gardening gloves and join Eco-Education staff Anthony DeCicco and Marissa Ortega-Welch, their team of volunteers, and the schoolkids in the field and help create more safe habitat for birds.



Students in the GGA Eco-Education Program out in the field.

Anthony DeCicco

Lisa Owens Viani Joins GGAS Staff

On October 10, Golden Gate Audubon welcomed our new development director, Lisa Owens Viani. For the past three years, Lisa has served as public outreach coordinator for the San Francisco Estuary Partnership. There, she managed production of the Estuary Partnership's award-winning newsletter, *Estuary News*, redesigned the website, and produced other outreach materials, including a series of 19 popular podcasts. Lisa also organized tours, forums, conferences, and media events for the partnership, and was awarded funding for innovative green streets and other "low-impact development" projects with East Bay cities. Prior to her tenure at the Estuary Partnership, Lisa worked for many years as a freelance writer and editor (including grant writing and one year as editor of *The Gull*) and for the Urban Creeks Council, San Francisco BayKeeper, Pacific Institute, and Berkeley Ecology Center.

Lisa has a BA in technical and professional writing with a minor in biology and an MA in geography and environmental studies from San Francisco State University. For her master's thesis, which won the university's Distinguished Student Award, she designed and implemented a restoration project on an urban stream in Richmond with the goal of creating better riparian habitat for resident and migratory songbirds. In her spare time, Lisa is a volunteer wildlife rescuer and recently worked with a broad coalition to get better legislation and protection for San Francisco Bay following oil spills.



EAST BAY PROJECTS POSSIBLE THREAT TO WILDLIFE HABITAT

Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) is planning to create a "second campus" away from the current campus in the hills above UC Berkeley. Initially, the second campus would provide space for equipment and researchers now occupying leased buildings in Walnut Creek, Oakland, Berkeley, and Emeryville; eventually it might be expanded. LBNL is considering six sites, one each in Richmond, Albany, Oakland, and Alameda, and two in Berkeley. Golden Gate Audubon is concerned about several of these sites due to their proximity to sensitive wetlands or shoreline habitat.

LBNL is treating all aspects of the site selection process as confidential, but based on the stated priorities, we believe that it will probably choose the Richmond or the southwest Berkeley site, and that the Alameda and Oakland sites are very

unlikely to be selected. East Bay Conservation Committee Chair Phil Price has often reminded LBNL of the importance of considering local environmental impacts, and has emphasized several concerns such as lighting, noise, and habitat destruction. LBNL plans to choose the site in November and immediately begin the environmental review process. The East Bay Conservation Committee will participate vigorously.

In other East Bay development news, plans are proceeding for a large senior housing complex and a grocery store on San Pablo Avenue in Albany at the Berkeley border. The store would be adjacent to Codornices Creek, which has been newly restored to provide good habitat value in a narrow corridor almost all the way from San Pablo Avenue on the east to the railroad tracks on the west. Golden Gate Audubon is naturally concerned about the possible impacts of the new development, and the East Bay Conservation Committee is hop-

ing that someone will volunteer to become our eyes, ears, and voice about this project. If you can get involved or want to find out more information, contact Phil Price: phil@creekcat.com.

AMERICA'S CUP AND BAY BIRDS

One of the world's largest sporting events, the America's Cup, will be held in the center of San Francisco Bay between July and September 2013. Most of the sailing competition will take place between the Golden Gate Bridge and the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, and will draw hundreds of thousands of spectators to the shoreline and bay. Concerned environmental groups have banded together into the America's Cup Environmental Coalition, and Golden Gate Audubon is working with this coalition to ensure that the city and race organizers avoid or mitigate impacts to birds. We are especially concerned about plans to build viewing grandstands near the Crissy Field Wildlife Protection Area where threatened Western Snowy Plovers begin to arrive for the winter and about nesting sites at Alcatraz Island.

Please contact GGAS Conservation Director Mike Lynes at mlynes@goldengateaudubon.org or 510.843.2222 to find out more about protecting birds during the America's Cup and how you can help.

SHARP PARK RESTORATION

Now is the time to restore the wetlands at Sharp Park. The golf course is old, but not historic, and has had problems since the delayed opening due to flooding. Today, San Francisco faces financial and legal issues from Sharp Park—the golf course has lost an average of \$162,000 annually since 2004. And, in order to maintain the course, the city will incur renovation costs of \$50 million to protect it from sea level rise and pay for endangered species compliance.

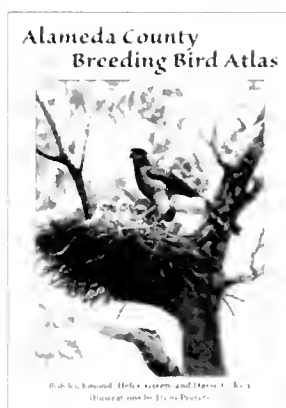
Legislation recently introduced by Supervisor John Avalos is a positive solution under which the city would retain ownership of the property, close the golf course, and turn long-term management over to the

Alameda County Breeding Bird Atlas Nears Release

Conceived nearly two decades ago, the much-anticipated *Alameda County Breeding Bird Atlas* will be available at Golden Gate Audubon's Christmas Bird Count dinners, held in Berkeley on December 18 and San Francisco on December 27. The 220-page book features 175 detailed species accounts written by Bob Richmond. Each is accompanied by a distribution map created by Rusty Scalf. Hans Peeters contributed beautiful illustrations of 30 species, including the cover. In 2003 Helen Green was asked to edit the book. She was joined several months later by David C. Rice. They eventually coaxed the atlas toward final publication.

Work on the atlas began in 1992 with initial planning by a group of local birders, including Ann Dewart, Don and Margaret Emery, Phil and Pat Gordon, Paul and Helen Green, Steve Margolin, Bob Richmond, Rusty Scalf, and Bette Wentzel. The effort was spearheaded by the late ornithologist, author, and Cal State Hayward professor Howard Cogswell, who served as their guiding light. More than 100 birders volunteered to survey Alameda County over five years, from 1993 to 1997. Bob Richmond in particular enabled the censusing to be completed during this period by concentrating on a large swath of the southeast portion of the county. Entries for many species have been updated to include their breeding status and distribution through 2008.

If you regularly bird parks and other locations in Alameda County, you will want to add the atlas to your library. It will be sold at the Golden Gate Audubon office.



New Birding Adventure for 2012

Golden Gate Audubon is offering a new trip for the new year—to Nome, Alaska, in June. Spaces are still available on three other 2012 trips, to Belize, Florida, and Klamath Basin in Oregon. For full itineraries, contact Chris Bard, GGAS Travel Coordinator, at chrisbard@earthlink.net or 510.522.5699.

SUMMER IN NOME, ALASKA

Accessible only by boat and airplane, Nome is a frontier town bordered on the west and south by the Bering Sea, and on the north and east by miles of trackless wilderness. During June and July, the Midnight Sun is at its brightest, the tundra is in full bloom, and the birds and mammals are breeding. The tour will cover the prime birding areas along the seacoast and the alpine tundra surrounding Nome. Most of the birds are in their resplendent breeding plumages, rarely if ever seen in the Lower 48. We'll try to locate accidental Asian species.

Four trips are scheduled, each limited to only four participants: June 8–12, June 12–16, June 16–20, and June 21–25. The guide will be Bay Area resident Rich Cimino of Yellowbilled Tours, who has led trips to many areas, including Nome. Cost: \$2,400, including lodging, ground transportation, and airport transfers, as well as a \$150 tax-deductible donation to GGAS. Not included are airfare and meals.

BELIZE—CARIBBEAN JEWEL

This trip led by Mark Pretti of Mark Pretti Nature Tours will explore a variety of habitats, seeking out many of the country's

570-plus species of birds such as toucans, woodcreepers, tanagers, antbirds, hummingbirds, trogons, and manakins. Also in the itinerary are a visit to Mayan ruins and a night safari boat ride.

Dates: February 3–13. Cost: \$3,200 per person, double occupancy, including all lodging, meals, guides, and ground transportation, as well as a \$150 tax-deductible donation to GGAS. Limit: 10.

FLORIDA'S EVERGLADES

Ed and Sil Pembleton of Naturalist Journeys will lead this trip to hotspots in the only subtropical wilderness in the continental US. On the itinerary are sites where the Florida Scrub-Jay can be found. An optional extension goes to the Florida Keys and by boat to the Dry Tortugas National Park.

Dates: April 16–23 main trip, April 23–27 extension. Cost: \$2,290 per person (extension: \$985), double occupancy, including lodging, most meals, guides, and ground transportation, as well as a \$150 tax-deductible donation to GGAS. Limit: 10.

KLAMATH BASIN WINTER BIRDS

This area of southern Oregon is rich in raptors in winter. On this trip led by Harry Fuller, participants will see Rough-legged and Ferruginous Hawks, Bald and Golden Eagles, and Prairie and Peregrine Falcons, plus Northern Shrikes, Black-billed Magpies, and Mountain Quail.

Dates: February 23–26. Cost: \$250 to \$325 per person for ground transportation and guide, including a \$50 tax-deductible donation to GGAS. Limit: 10.

CONSERVATION CORNER from page 3

National Park Service. This partnership would allow the park to transition from a golf course to the trail-based recreation park that San Franciscans and visitors are seeking. The National Park Service has the experience to manage wetland restoration, as we have seen at Mori Point (adjacent to Sharp Park) and Crissy Field. The wetland restoration solution would protect the endangered San Francisco Garter Snake and the threatened California Red-legged Frog, as well as other wildlife including birds, into the future.

Please contact GGAS Conservation Director Mike Lynes at mlynes@goldengateaudubon.org or 510.843.2222 if you are interested in ensuring the restoration of Sharp Park.

HELP RESTORE BIRD HABITAT

We invite you to join us for our monthly workdays at our restoration sites. Site details and directions can be found at www.goldengateaudubon.org/volunteer.

- Alameda Wildlife Refuge, Alameda: November 13, December 11, 9 a.m. – noon.
- Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline, Oakland: November 19, December 17, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- Golden Gate Park Bison Paddock, San Francisco: November 19, December 17, 9 a.m. – noon (with SF Recreation and Parks).
- Lands End East Wash, San Francisco Presidio: November 19, 1 – 4 p.m. (with Parks Conservancy).
- Pier 94, San Francisco: December 3, 9 a.m. – noon.

Welcome Our New Interns

Golden Gate Audubon is excited to introduce three new interns.

Iris Hsu, conservation advocacy intern, is an undergraduate at UC Berkeley, focusing on environmental economics and policy. She has been working on GGAS conservation projects, including restoring Sharp Park in San Francisco and the Alameda Wildlife Refuge, and on our policy on rodenticides.

Jonathan Barber, volunteer restoration intern, was honorably discharged from the US Marine Corps and is now pursuing his education and interest in birds, science, and conservation. In addition to supporting habitat restoration at Oakland's Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline and San Francisco's Pier 94, Jonathan can be found welcoming members to our Speaker Series.

Rachel Spadafore, restoration coordinator, recently received her MS from the University of San Francisco in environmental management and wrote her thesis on community-based restoration in the Bay Area. Rachel is very excited about the new opportunity to work with our volunteers at Pier 94 and other GGAS restoration sites.



The Brazilian Pantanal: Birds and Jaguars in the World's Largest Wetland

Paul Donahue

Berkeley: Thursday, November 17—7 p.m. refreshments, 7:30 program (free for GGAS members, \$5 nonmembers)

The Pantanal of southwestern Brazil is the world's largest wetland, a vast mosaic of rivers, creeks, marshes, swamps, lagoons, tall riparian forest, lower dry forest, and savanna. The area extends into extreme eastern Bolivia and extreme northern Paraguay, but the majority lies in the Brazilian states of Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul. This much water attracts abundant wildlife, and the Pantanal is home to large numbers of wading birds and other fish-eating birds, and holds the world's densest population of jaguars, the largest cat in the Americas.

Paul Donahue, a naturalist, bird artist, photographer, environmentalist, and tree climber, has been working in South America since 1972. Most of his time has been spent in the rainforests of the western Amazon Basin, particularly eastern Peru, where he has done extensive bird survey work and tape recording of bird vocalizations. Paul and his wife, Teresa Wood, have constructed two canopy walkways and dozens of canopy observation platforms to view and study the wildlife of that stratum of the rainforest. Lately, he has been researching jaguars and Zigzag Herons in the Pantanal and photographing the area's abundant bird and mammal life.

Berkeley Speaker Series: Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (between Solano and Marin).
Directions: www.northbrae.org/directions.htm



Jaguar in the Pantanal.

North American Owl Class at GGAS

Dave Quady, author of the owls section of National Geographic's *Complete Birds of North America* and a frequent GGAS field trip leader, will again teach his class on owls. The class meets four evenings, February 7, 8, 14, and 15, 7 to 8:30 p.m., at the Golden Gate Audubon office, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley. Three weekend afternoon and/or evening field trips will be scheduled for February and March; specific dates and times will be announced.

As he shares his extensive knowledge of this fascinating group of birds, Dave will describe what makes owls different from other birds, offer tips for identifying them by sight and sound, and provide insight into their habits and habitats. The three field trips will visit local owl habitats, where class participants can hope to hear and see owls. For more details on the class, e-mail Dave at davequady@att.net. The class is limited to 20. Sign-ups begin at noon on Monday, January 9, 2012. The fee is \$80. To sign up, call 510.843.2222.



Great Horned Owls.

A Big Thank-You

Golden Gate Audubon is grateful to all the photographers who provided images for our newsletter over the past year, as well as for our annual reports and website. Sharon Beals, Rose Britton, Jason Crotty, Della Dash, Charles Denson, Doug Greenberg, Tom Grey, Bob Gunderson, Alan Hopkins, Jennifer Isola, Lee Karney, Melani King, Bob Lewis, Steve Lombardi, Jeanine Lovett, Mary Malec, Richard Mellor, Dominik Mosur, Paul Murphy, Verne Nelson, Glenn Nevill, Marissa Ortega-Welch, Brent Plater, Mark J. Rauzon, Harjeet Singh, Paul Schwartz, Glen Tepke, Jerry Ting, Noreen Weeden, Alan Wight, and Denise Wight. We thank you for your generosity.

Bruce Mast's Observations

Bruce Mast's column covering notable sightings for August and September can be found on the Golden Gate Audubon website under "Birding Resources." Of special note: The injured Flammulated Owl, reported in an earlier column and pictured in the July-August *Gull*, was successfully rehabilitated and released in the hills south of San Antonio Reservoir in southern Alameda County.

Choose the Gull Online

Join other Golden Gate Audubon members who are downloading our newsletter from our website rather than receiving it in the mail. You will help save paper and reduce our expenses for printing and mailing. Best of all, the photographs in the online version of the *Gull* are in color. As each issue is published, we will e-mail you a link. To choose the *Gull* online, e-mail ggas@goldengateaudubon.org or call 510.843.2222.



FIELD TRIPS

STEVE LOMBARDI, COORDINATOR

\$ Entrance fee

🚲 Biking trip

Jewel Lake

Tilden Regional Park

**Fridays, November 4, December 2,
8:30 – 10:30 a.m.**

Phila Rogers, Coordinator, 510.848.9156,
philajane6@yahoo.com

Monthly first Friday trips at Tilden continue. Meet at the parking lot at the north end of Central Park Dr. for a 1-mile stroll through this lush riparian area. Fall is here, and we will look for both wintering and resident birds. We should see waterbirds on the lake. Rain cancels. Note: Phila is looking for someone to co-lead this trip. Please contact her if you would like to help keep this trip running.

San Francisco Botanical Garden

**Sundays, November 6, December 4,
8 – 10:30 a.m.**

Ginny Marshall, ginnybirder@sbcglobal.net; Dominik Mosur, polskatata@yahoo.com; Alan Ridley, allanrid@pacbell.net; Helen McKenna, 415.566.3241 (Leaders vary by month.)

Meet at the front gate of the garden in Golden Gate Park, 9th Ave. at Lincoln Way. The garden has several micro-

habitats that attract an array of resident, migrant, and vagrant birds. This monthly trip is oriented toward helping beginning birders develop their skills in spotting and identifying birds. The garden charges \$7/person if you are not an SF resident or garden member. Bring identification for residency and membership status.

Upper San Leandro Reservoir/ Valle Vista Staging Area

Central Contra Costa County

Friday, November 11, 9 a.m. – noon

Bob Lewis, Bob@wingbeats.org,
510.845.5001, 510.725.7696 (cell)

Meet at the Valle Vista Staging Area in Canyon. We'll walk the trails, looking for woodpeckers and sapsuckers, raptors, titmice, chickadees, nuthatches, and other wintering birds. With luck, we may see interesting ducks like Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, and Wood Duck. Trip goes rain or shine.

From Berkeley and Oakland, take Hwy. 24 through the tunnel and exit at Orinda. Turn right onto Moraga Way, travel 4.8 miles to Canyon Rd., and turn right. Go 1.2 miles to the Valle Vista Staging area, an EBMUD parking lot on the left. No water; portable toilet.

Lake Merced

San Francisco

Saturday, November 12, 8 – 11 a.m.

Dan and Joan Murphy,
murphsf@comcast.net

Lake Merced and the surrounding parklands form a critical habitat for migrating, wintering, and nesting birds on the coast. The freshwater marsh surrounding the lake is largest between Pt. Reyes National Seashore to the north and Pescadero to the south. Between the marsh, the open water, and the surrounding uplands, Lake Merced is an excellent habitat for many birds. A visit at this time gives us a chance to see a few late migrants and many of the birds that will winter here. Join us to explore this natural treasure.

Meet in the Sunset Circle, the large circular parking lot at the south end of Sunset Blvd. We plan to walk a little over a mile and drive to several sites around the lake. Wear sturdy shoes and layered clothing for coastal weather, which can change considerably during the course of a morning. If rain is forecast, bring your rain gear. We plan to end the trip before lunch.

🚲 Upper Alameda Creek/ Quarry Lakes

Alameda County

Saturday, November 12, 8:15 a.m.

Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233,
kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

This trip concentrates on upper Alameda Creek from Quarry Lakes to the Niles Staging Area. We may begin at the Union City Library Pond. We will ride on the north gravel and south paved sides of the creek, on gravel trails within Quarry Lakes, and sometimes on the street. Bring lunch and liquids, and dress for variable weather. Bicycle helmet required. Rain cancels. Contact Kathy if you would like her cell number.

Transit: Meet at Union City BART station at 8:15 a.m. Fremont train passes through MacArthur at 7:34. **Car:** From I-880 south, take exit 23 for Alvarado Niles Rd., turn left onto Alvarado Niles Rd., go 2.4 miles, and turn left onto Decoto Rd. Continue .2 mile, then turn right on Union Square and left into BART parking lot.

New Field Trip Coordinator

Golden Gate Audubon welcomes GGAS member Steve Lombardi as the new volunteer coordinator of our field trip program. Steve and his wife, Carol, have been leading trips for more than a year, both locally to such hotspots as Mitchell Canyon, Shadow Cliffs, and Mines Road in Alameda County and farther afield to the Sacramento Valley. The report of their trip to Orange County with Rusty Scalf is featured in the September-October *Gull*. Steve and Carol have participated in the annual Oakland Christmas Bird Count for a decade and also volunteer for the Benicia and East Alameda CBCs.

We extend a special thank-you to volunteer Pam Belchamber. For several years, she took responsibility for this important job of organizing our field trips and making sure they appeared in the *Gull*. Our many field trip leaders and trip participants thank you!

Corona Heights

Field trip #10

**Fridays, November 18, December 16,
8 – 10 a.m.**

Charles Hibbard; Brian Fitch, Dominik Mosur, polskatata@yahoo.com (Leaders vary by month.)

Meet in front of the Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, at the end of Museum Way off Roosevelt. We will enjoy views of the city and bay as we circle Corona Heights, checking the east canyon woodland and north forest for residents and migrants, as well as monitoring the hilltop scrub and south cliff.

Chain of Lakes and Environs

Saturday, November 19, 9 a.m. – noon

Martha Wessitsh, martha@wessitsh.com, 415.681.8059, 415.533.4470

Meet at the parking lot between Middle and South Lakes in Golden Gate Park, Chain of Lakes Dr. We will see land birds, possibly ducks, and maybe some other goodies on the ponds. Restrooms are available, and little walking is involved. Heavy rain cancels.

Birds of the Bay

Sunday, November 20, 10 a.m.

Carol Kiser, carol_kiser@nps.gov, 415.447.5000

This walk for children and beginners starts with a brief orientation in the use of binoculars and field guides. Then we will spend an hour or so looking for resident and migrating birds. Meet at entrance to Hyde Street Pier at Hyde and Jefferson on the western border of Fisherman's Wharf. Bring books and binoculars if you have them. A hat and layers of clothing are recommended. Nearby parking is at the foot of Van Ness Ave. (free for 4 hours), Ghirardelli Square, and the Anchorage.

San Francisco Bay with Dolphin Charters

Sunday, November 20, 9:45 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Bob Lewis

Spaces may still be available for this trip to see the bay by boat. We will cruise

San Francisco Bay and San Pablo Bay waters, home to thousands of wintering birds. Many areas on the itinerary—the shorelines of Alcatraz Island, the Marin Headlands, Angel Island, the Marin Islands, and the Brothers and Sisters Islands—can be observed only from the water. In addition to wintering ducks, loons, grebes, and gulls, we expect to see resident cormorants, pelicans, and murres, as well as seals and sea lions and, with luck, an occasional porpoise. Dress in layers. Bring liquids and lunch. The trip is limited to 32 people. Cost is \$85 for GGAS members, \$95 for nonmembers. Register online, or reserve your spot by contacting Stephanie Strait, GGAS Office Manager, 510.843.2222 or ggas@goldengateaudubon.org

Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

Wednesdays, November 23,

December 28, 9:30 a.m. – noon

Hilary Powers, 510.834.1066, hilary@powersedit.com; Ruth Tobey, 510.528.2093, ruthtobey@gmail.com

Meet at the large spherical cage near the Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue. We will bird around there, then go up the garden path toward Children's Fairyland or walk down the lake toward Embarcadero, after which we will cover what we missed. These are peak birding months at the lake. Just about everyone who's going to spend the winter here should be in by December, including both scaups and

several other diving ducks and five species of grebes.

Facilities include restrooms, picnic tables, and a playground. There is a small boat launch on the north shore, but no boat rentals. The boat launch is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekends. The boat launch is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekends.

Sacramento Delta and Valley Refuges

Saturday – Sunday, December 3 – 4

Steve and Carol Lombard, 925.785.6035, hotrock@sbcglobal.net, Rusty Scott, rscalf@sonic.net, 510.666.9736

As of late September, this trip was full and had a long waiting list. The leaders will be happy to add you to the list if you wish. On Saturday, the trip goes to the delta's Sandhill Crane staging area and the Cosumnes River Preserve and ends at the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge. After spending the night in Willows, the group will start out at the Sacramento refuge, then cross the valley to the Gray Lodge Wildlife Area. Confirmed participants will receive a list of motels so they can make their own reservations.

Redwood Shores

Saturday, December 10

Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233, kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

Meet at 9:15 a.m. at the trailhead at Oracle Parkway and Shoreway Rd. in Belmont.

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Carpooling and Other Field Trip Resources

If you are going on a field trip, would you welcome company? Do you have room in your car to take other birders? To help find a ride or offer a ride, sign up with GGA's carpool group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/GGACarPool>. When you sign up, you answer a few simple questions, then receive a confirming e-mail. Once you are a member, you post messages under "Need Ride" or "Offer Ride," along with the destination and date. The more birders who sign up, the more useful the group will be. Birders are encouraged to help the driver with expenses by contributing to the cost of fuel and bridge tolls.

East Bay Regional District: www.ebparks.org/parks

SF Bay Trail: <http://baytrail.abag.ca.gov>

Bay Area transit: www.transitinfo.org

California state parks: www.parks.ca.gov

National parks: www.nps.gov/findapark/index.htm

National wildlife refuges: www.fws.gov/refuges

This circuit of Redwood Shores is a flat 11-mile loop on the SF Bay Trail and other bike paths, mostly paved, some on bike lanes on city streets. A highlight is the sewer ponds at Radio Rd. Bring lunch and liquids, and dress for variable weather. Bicycle helmet required. Rain cancels. Contact Kathy if you would like her cell phone number. Trip leaders will drive to the start of the trip; if you can offer or need a ride, please call well in advance.

Transit: Caltrain arrives in Belmont at 8:58 a.m. (Caltrain departs SF at 8:15, Millbrae at 8:39; BART through MacArthur at 7:35 arrives Millbrae at 8:29.) Exit station to east and ride Masonic to end at Hiller. Turn right, go one block, and cross to opposite side of Marine Parkway, then go left/east over freeway interchange, using great caution at entrances and exits. At last exit, go down pedestrian/bike path to Shoreway Rd., then turn left to light and cross to north side of Marine Parkway. Continue one block on Oracle Parkway and turn left to parking area. Caltrain operates on an hourly schedule on weekends. Return from San Carlos station north toward Millbrae and SF at 1:45 p.m. **Car:** From Hwy. 101 in Belmont, exit at Ralston/Marine Parkway and go east toward the bay .4 mile. Turn left at first light east of freeway (Oracle Parkway) and turn left at next intersection (stop sign) and then immediately go into parking area.

A Winter Day at the Salton Sea
Sunday, December 11, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
 Eddie Bartley, eddie@naturetrip.com,
 415.355.0450

Join Eddie Bartley and Noreen Weeden at one of California's premiere birding destinations to explore the wonderfully eccentric Salton Sea. Meet at the site of the former Salton Sea History Museum in North Shore. From there, we'll head south, stopping at a place or two based on recent sightings and especially at the Sonny Bono NWR. If time permits we may visit a palm oasis. Winter birds expected include most of the waterbirds seen at other California wildlife refuges and such southern specialties as Gambel's Quail, Verdin, Abert's Towhee, and Large-billed Savannah Sparrow. One of the state's more robust Burrowing Owl populations resides in this area, and winter rarities are not uncommon. Last winter we saw a Taiga Bean Goose. A nice plus is that the Salton Sea is typically warmer than Central and Northern California refuges. Please contact Eddie if you are joining the trip and provide your contact information.

Bring lunch and liquids, and dress in layers. The terrain may be muddy in places.


From Indio, take Hwy. 111 south 23 miles to North Shore (10 miles south of Mecca). Go right at Marina Dr. toward the sea and park in the museum lot. Restrooms or water may not be available, so stop as needed before you arrive.

Sibley Volcanic Regional Preserve

Thursday, December 15, 8 – 11 a.m.
 Bob Lewis, Bob@wingbeats.org,
 510.845.5001, 510.725.7696

The Oakland Christmas Bird Count is on December 18, and count week runs from December 15 to 21. This trip will give us a little jump start on at least finding count week land birds and raptors. Be prepared for a hike of several miles. We might follow the morning trip with a visit to Lake Temescal. Trip goes rain or shine.

Drive south on Grizzly Peak Blvd. to the end and turn left on Skyline Blvd. The entrance to Sibley is a short distance down Skyline on the left. If you are interested in Lake Temescal, bring lunch. Water and restrooms available at both locations.

 **Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline**
 Oakland, Alameda County
Sunday, January 8, 2012
 Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233,
 kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

Meet at Fruitvale BART at 9 a.m. or Tidewater Staging Area at 9:20. We'll ride the SF Bay Trail from East Creek Point to Damon Marsh and Arrowhead Marsh. Return is via Doolittle Dr. and Fernside Blvd. A high tide of 7.4 ft. is at 10:51 a.m. Winter high tides are a good time to see rails and, if there has been enough rain, lots of ducks and shorebirds in the seasonal wetlands. Bring lunch and liquids,

and dress for variable weather. Bicycle helmet required. Rain cancels. Contact Kathy if you would like her cell number.

Car: Exit I-880 at High St. in Oakland and go southwest to High St. Bridge to Alameda and cross bridge. Turn left onto Fernside Blvd. and park on street. Bike back over bridge, turn right onto Tidewater Ave., and go .25 mi. to Tidewater Staging Area on right, just before Lesser St. on left.

Yosemite's Birdlife

Friday–Sunday, June 1 – 3, 2012
 Dave Quady, davequady@att.net,
 510.704.9353; Dave Cornman

The lower and middle elevations of the park are alive with singing birds in late May and early June. A variety of habitats supports a rich diversity of birdlife, typically including 7 flycatchers (3 *Empidonax*), 3 vireos, 7 warblers, and many other species in full song and breeding plumage. This trip is limited to the first 20 participants who sign up with the leader. Sign-ups—by e-mail only, please—begin at noon on November 14.

Past participants have found it convenient to camp at Hodgdon Meadow in the park (reservation period opens January 15; campground fills very fast) or to stay in campgrounds or commercial lodgings outside the park's Big Oak Flat entrance. Details, including meeting times and locations and lodging suggestions, will be provided to confirmed participants. Carpooling is encouraged. If participants want to arrive before June 1, keep in mind that reservations for campsites in May open up on November 14. Pack warm clothes, rainwear, and rubber boots for wet meadows. Bring lunches for Saturday and Sunday and be prepared to walk about 3 miles each day. \$

Do You Like to Bike and Bird Around San Francisco Bay?

If you do, consider volunteering to assist on Golden Gate Audubon birding-by-bicycle field trips in the East Bay and other locations. Nearly all the trips go to bird-rich habitats that are accessible via the San Francisco Bay Trail and other bike-friendly trails. For most trips, participants have the option of traveling by transit to meet the group. We are looking for someone who will support attendees by encouraging them and helping with any routine bike maintenance. An experienced Golden Gate Audubon field trip leader plans and leads the trips and shares information on the birds. To volunteer or if you have questions, contact Noreen Weeden, Volunteer Coordinator, 510.301.0570 or volunteer@goldengateaudubon.org.

Find the Perfect Gift at the Nature Store

Calendars, puzzles, plush birds, field guides, books on backyard birding, and an array of stocking stuffers—these are just a selection of what's on the shelves of the GGAS Nature Store for holiday giving. Most items are very reasonable—under \$20—and if you are a Golden Gate Audubon member, you receive a 10 percent discount on store purchases.

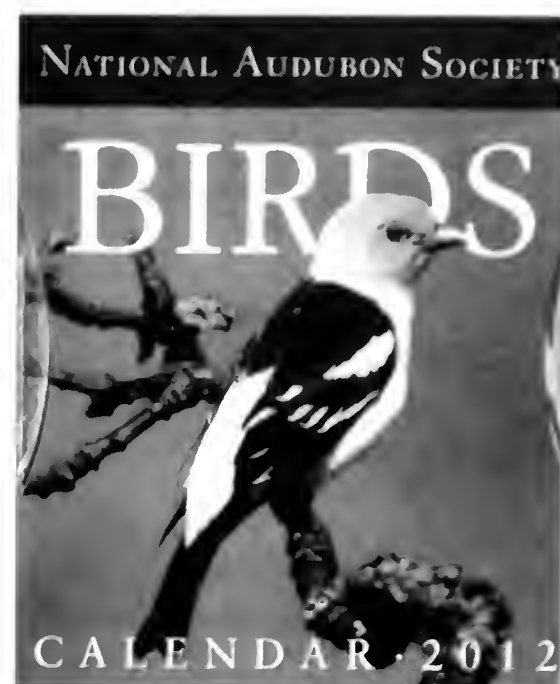
Though you can purchase many of the same gifts from other sources, keep in mind that the proceeds from all Nature Store sales help support our education and conservation programs.

National Audubon calendars are known for their excellent photography. The Nature Store has three styles for 2012: two wall calendars, an engagement calendar, and a page-a-day calendar that sits on a desk. High-quality photography is also featured in three 500-piece Audubon jigsaw puzzles, one with a Rufous Hummingbird, another with a Northern Cardinal, and a third with an Eastern Bluebird.

If you know someone who enjoys backyard birding, consider giving a book about bird feeding or wildlife-friendly gardening. The Nature Store carries three popular publications:

- *Stokes' Beginners' Guide to Bird Feeding*—Covers all types of bird feeders and foods, ways to keep squirrels at bay, and the seed preferences of various species, accompanied by color photographs.
- *Stokes' Bird Gardening Book*—Describes using water features, natural and artificial nest cavities, and appropriate plantings to attract birds to your yard, illustrated with color photographs.
- *Bird-by-Bird Gardening: The Ultimate Guide to Bringing in Your Favorite Birds*—Comprehensive 400-page book on creating a year-round backyard habitat, with helpful garden designs for attracting particular bird families and plenty of color photographs.

New to the Nature Store this year is a collection of modestly priced items with colorful vintage bird images: a set of 24 magnets; a beautifully patterned business card case; and a rubber stamp. Vintage bird images are also featured on a set of 24 flat Christmas cards with envelopes, 12 sheets of stickers, and 3 rubber stamps. A red ink pad is included.



A subscription to the *Gull* through a Golden Gate Audubon membership (see the form on page 12) is a gift that recipients will enjoy the year-round. Each issue brings listings of free field trips, announcements of classes and monthly lectures, and many other ways to learn about birdlife and experience special Bay Area places.

If you plan to visit the Nature Store, call 510.843.2222 to confirm the hours. You can also call to check on the availability of merchandise.

Calling All Potential Field Trip Leaders!

Have you ever thought about being a field trip leader for Golden Gate Audubon? If you have experienced a Golden Gate Audubon field trip, you know the importance of this free public program. Novice and expert birders alike convene at locations around the Bay Area and beyond to enjoy the sights and sounds of resident and migratory birds.

The skill requirements for a field trip leader are simple:

- Be able to identify most birds by sight or song.
- Have the people skills to ensure that the group gets along and has a pleasant time on the trip.
- Serve as a spokesperson for Golden Gate Audubon by introducing participants to the organization, talking about membership, and collecting names and contact information.
- Be willing to plan trip logistics of location, date, meeting time, and description, whether the trip is monthly, quarterly, or occasional.

"Taking the field trip leadership class was fun," says Steve Lombardi, the new Golden Gate Audubon field trips coordinator (see page 6), "and leading field trips has been fun as well. The class instructors told us we didn't have to be expert birders to lead trips—and we've found this to be true. Just organizing a trip to an interesting place you like makes for a successful trip. And you meet the nicest people!"

Golden Gate Audubon is looking for leaders who would enjoy introducing their favorite spots to other birders. We would also like to expand our program to include trips focusing on butterflies, dragonflies, native plants, and more!

If you are interested in leading field trips, Golden Gate Audubon is hosting two morning trainings: Sunday, January 15, 2012, at Heron's Head Park in San Francisco, and Saturday, January 21, 2012, at Arrowhead Marsh in Oakland. Contact Noreen Weeden at 510.301.0570 or nweeden@goldengateaudubon.org for more information. Please RSVP by January 9, 2012.

beyond. The National Audubon Society has made the results of all counts since 1900 accessible to everyone at www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/hr/index.html. Researchers and bird-watchers alike can use the data to help study changes in resident bird populations.

San Francisco's count circle includes the north tower of the Golden Gate Bridge, all of San Francisco, and down the peninsula to San Bruno Mountain and the wetlands north of the San Francisco International Airport. With its wide variety of habitats, the count generally tops 160 species.

Oakland's count circle extends from Treasure Island northeast to San Pablo Reservoir in Contra Costa County, and south to St. Mary's College in Moraga and the Oakland International Airport. Also blessed with a wide variety of habitats, the Oakland count typically records more than 170 bird species. Both counts have ranked among the top 25 nationwide in numbers of species found.

"We want a good number of participants, so that we can do a good job of covering every area in our count circle," says Alan. "You can search for birds from dawn to dusk—or longer if you look for owls, as some of us do.

We'll do our best to assign you to an area that suits your interests and your abilities. Wherever you're assigned, you'll work with an experienced area leader. If your time is limited, you can still help by spending a few hours looking for birds around your workplace or in a nearby park. We want yard watchers, too. Some species, such as Pine Siskin, are often found mostly at feeders."

Both bird counts end the day with a festive group dinner. Everyone is invited: field counters, yard watchers, and anyone else who wants to join the fun. "The dinner is a great event in its own right," notes Alan. "There's good, healthful food and lots of it, it's affordable, and it's a great way to conclude the day. People tell about their day in the field and figure out how many species we recorded. We also learn what rare birds

were found—like last year's Pigeon Guillemot, Black-legged Kittiwake, and Evening Grosbeaks—and where."

Golden Gate Audubon Volunteer Coordinator Noreen Weeden will plan the dinners this year. She promises a fine meal, so that you can go home full of good food as well as memories of a good day of birding. "Even if you're unable to participate in the count, especially in San Francisco on a workday," Noreen says, "join us at the dinner to visit with the counters and hear the results."

Volunteers willing to help decorate, set up, serve, and clean up at dinners are greatly appreciated. Please contact Noreen Weeden at volunteer@goldengateaudubon.org if you can help. You can also go to the GGAS website and download a form for volunteering at the dinner.

Are You Ready to Count?

If so, act now! Visit Golden Gate Audubon at www.goldengateaudubon.org, then scroll down below the "Get Involved" banner and click on the "Christmas Bird Count" link to sign up. Sign-up deadline for the Oakland count is November 27; for the San Francisco count, December 6. For further information on the Oakland count, please call Dave Quady at 510.704.9353 or Bob Lewis at 510.845.5001; for the San Francisco count, e-mail sfbirdcount@yahoo.com. Call the GGAS office at 510.843.2222 if you need help signing up. Phone the office or e-mail ggas@goldengateaudubon.org to RSVP for the dinner.

Donations

Many thanks to our generous donors! Donations from July 21 to September 22, 2011.

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 Clorox Company Foundation, Morrison & Foerster Foundation, NorCal Mutual Insurance Company, Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) Corporation Foundation

Farallones Island Foundation, North Richmond Mitigation Fee Fund

Three Great Reasons to Support Golden Gate Audubon!

This has been an exciting year for Golden Gate Audubon, with many important conservation victories benefiting Bay Area wildlife. From restoring thriving wetlands in San Francisco and the East Bay to engaging hundreds of children and adults in education, advocacy, and restoration programs, we are protecting Bay Area habitat and making it safer for birds.

Here are the top three reasons to support Golden Gate Audubon right now:

1. Because you love nature and birds.
2. Because you understand that the health of birds reflects the health of our ecosystem.
3. Because you realize the importance of educating this generation of young people about nature, the protection of birds, and our environmental legacy.

This year, Golden Gate Audubon applied your support in many ways. We reached an historic agreement to replace dangerous, outdated turbines at Altamont Pass with newer technology that could reduce bird deaths by up to 80 percent.

BIRD SAFE BUILDINGS from page 1

The city's move toward the standards began in 2008, when Golden Gate Audubon, PG&E, and the San Francisco Department of the Environment launched the voluntary Lights Out San Francisco. This successful program, still active today, encourages downtown building owners to turn off unnecessary lights, linking smart energy policy with bird conservation (see the September-October 2011 *Gull*). Following that launch, Golden Gate Audubon and the American Bird Conservancy presented the Planning Department with 30 years of scientific studies on bird-building collisions. The department then began developing standards modeled after successful bird-safe building standards in Chicago, New York, and Toronto.

Clear glass is invisible to birds and to humans, but both can learn to recognize and avoid it. Unfortunately, most birds' first encounter with glass is fatal. They collide at full speed when they try to fly toward open

We expanded wetland in Yocum Slough on San Francisco's southern waterfront and we launched our award-winning Eco Education Program in San Francisco (see page 2 for more information).

We published the comprehensive *Alameda County Breeding Bird Atlas* (see page 5) and we kicked off our first ever Winter Bird Count for Kids.

Conservation takes time and persistence. Thanks to members like you, we have been protecting Bay Area birds and habitat since 1917. Our goal is to inspire you and others in our community to enjoy and conserve the Bay's unique natural environment.

As 2011 comes to a close, we thank you, our members, for all you do to help Golden Gate Audubon succeed. And we ask you to continue your support as you make your charitable plans for the end of 2011 and into 2012.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

It's easy to continue your support of Golden Gate Audubon today—or to get involved for the very first time. You can use the form

sky, plants, or other objects seen through glass or reflected on its surface. This is especially true at low elevations and near "urban bird refuges" in highly vegetated parks and along wetlands and waterways, referred to in the standards as "collision zones."

And, as the standards note, "juvenile resident species and migrants of all ages—those least familiar with the urban setting—face the greatest risk of injury or death from the hazards of the city environment."

The new ordinance includes mandatory sections for new buildings and for major retrofits where glazing is being replaced. Glass on the lower 60 feet of these buildings must be "fritted," netted, stenciled, frosted, or otherwise altered to be less reflective. Exterior screens or grids or ultraviolet patterns visible to birds can also be used. The alternatives for window treatments range from inexpensive screens to new energy-efficient glazing. In addition, the standards apply to building features such as glass skywalks and windbreaks on buildings near sensitive



Bufflehead

on page 12 to give a gift membership this holiday season, to renew your own membership, or to make a special contribution. You can also make a gift online at www.goldengateaudubon.org. And please remember to tell an adult friend or a young person why you are excited to be a member of Golden Gate Audubon. That's the most effective way to help us grow.

habitat areas, such as San Francisco Bay and Golden Gate Park.

The ordinance also includes voluntary recommendations to reduce risks to birds, including participation in the Lights Out program. The Planning Department is working with Golden Gate Audubon to provide educational information to architects, developers, and building owners.

As Dr. Christine Sheppard, manager of the American Bird Conservancy's Bird Collisions Campaign, notes, "The San Francisco Board of Supervisors is showing national leadership on this tragic wildlife issue. San Francisco is acting responsibly by helping to reduce those preventable deaths."

Copies of the new Standards for Bird Safe Buildings can be found on the GGAS website. Golden Gate Audubon would like to recognize the exceptional work of GGAS conservation staff members Noreen Weeden and Mike Lynes in bringing about standards that will directly save the lives of thousands of birds.

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If we receive your gift request by December 15, the recipient will be sent membership information by Christmas Day, including our newsletter and details about the conservation and education initiatives that your gift supports.

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- ☐ \$35 Individual
- ☐ \$50 Family
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- ☐ \$200
- ☐ I would like to include a donation to support GGAS's conservation, education, and birding programs.

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